

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINSHA 03216 01 OF 02 090013Z

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2837

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 KINSHASA 3216

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (P A R A 5 & 6 G A R B L E D)

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, AO, CG

SUBJECT: SHABA ATTACK: MOBUTU'S DIPLOMATIC FLANKING OPERATIONS

1. AS WE HAVE REPORTED SEPARATELY, IN HIS EFFORTS TO PRESS US FOR MORE MILITARY AND POLITICAL SUPPORT MOBUTU HAS BEEN PROPAGATING THE LINE THAT THE U.S. IS LETTING ZAIRE DOWN IN ITS TIME OF GREATEST NEED. HE IS USING VARIOUS CHANNELS INCLUDING THE FRENCH, BELGIANS AND EGYPTIANS. THE MOST RECENT EXAMPLE OF USE OF THE MEDIA TO GET THIS MESSAGE ACROSS IS AN ARTICLE IN THE 30 MARCH ISSUE OF "SPECIALE"--THE BELGIAN WEEKLY WIDELY KNOWN TO BE MOBUTU'S MOUTHPIECE IN EUROPE. FOLLOWING IS EMBASSY TRANSLATION:

2. QUOTE: AGOSTINO NETO, DOCTOR IN MEDICINE AND PRESIDENT OF THE M.P.L.A., HAS BEEN SEATED IN THE CITY OF LUANDA SINCE NOVEMBER 1975. EVEN THOUGH THEY CAN COUNT ON THE COLLABORATION OF 6,000-7,000 KATANGAN EX-GENDARMES, NETO'S TROOPS ARE SWEEPED ASIDE BY THOSE OF THE FNLA UNDER HOLDEN ROBERTO AND OF THE UNITA UNDER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 KINSHA 03216 01 OF 02 090013Z

JONAS SAVIMBI.

3. WITHIN A FEW DAYS OF ANGOLAN INDEPENDENCE-WHICH PORTUGAL, THE FORMER COLONIAL POWER SET FOR 11 NOVEMBER-NETO FEELS THE VISE CLOSING IN ON HIM.

4. AT THIS POINT, THE M.P.L.A. PRESIDENT NO LONGER HESITATES:

HE APPEALS TO THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT FOR HELP, AS THIS PRINCIPLE HAD BEEN AGREED UPON FOR SOME TIME.

5. SEVERAL HUNDRED CUBAN "ADVISORS" ARRIVE IN LUANDA. THEY FORM THE FRONT LINE OF A VERITABLE "ARMADA" WHICH WILL LAND IN THE ANGOLAN CAPITAL DURING THE WEEKS TO COME. 11-12,000 MEN ARE TRANSPORTED VIA BRAZZAVILLE ON THE SOVIET ANTONOV 22'S, ARMED WITH KALATCHNIKOV ASSAULT RIFLES, HEAVY MORTARS, AMPHIBIOUS TANKS, AND SURFACE TO SURFACE MISSILES BAPTIZED "STALIN ORGANS". THIS NEW STYLE "AFRIKA KORPS" HAS AN IMPORTANT AIR COVER: SCORES OF MIG 21'S.

6. UNDER THE FIRE OF CUBAN ARTILLERY AND TANKS THE FNLA AND UNITA MUST GIVE GROUND. THE POPULAR REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA IS PROCLAIMED: NETO IS ITS PRESIDENT.

7. FOURTEEN MONTHS LATER - AND EVEN THOUGH HE HAD PROMISED PRESIDENT MOBUTU TO DISARM THE FORMER KATANGAN GENDARMES - AGOSTINO NETO AUTHORIZES THE LATTER TO ATTACK THE ZAIRIAN PROVINCE OF SHABA. THE AGGRESSION HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR SOME TIME SINCE NETO HAD ASKED THE CUBANS TO PUT INSTRUCTORS - GUERRILLA SPECIALISTS - AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE "KATANGANS". HE HAD GIVEN THEM THE MOST PERFECTED SOVIET WEAPONS AND, ABOVE ALL, HE HAD PERMITTED BELGIAN AND FRENCH MERCENARIES TO RE-JOIN THEIR FORMER COMPANION IN ADVENTURE, "GENERAL" MBUMBA, COMMANDER OF THE FORMER GENDARMES.

8. THIS HISTORICAL PREAMBLE IS INDISPENSABLE IF ONE WANTS TO APPRECIATE THE TRUE VALUE OF THE ACCUSATION THAT NETO IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 KINSHA 03216 01 OF 02 090013Z

MAKING TODAY: "PRESIDENT MOBUTU WANTS TO INTERNATIONALIZE THE SHABA AFFAIR WHICH IS NOTHING BUT AN INTERNAL PROBLEM OF ZAIRE; IN SO DOING HE RUNS THE RISK OF CREATING A NEW VIETNAM."

9. THE ANGOLAN LEADER'S REMARKS ARE THUS EXACTLY CONTRARY TO THE TRUTH. AND THE PRESENCE IN AFRICA OF FIDEL CASTRO AND NIKOLAI PORDGORNY WILL CHANGE NOTHING. TREACHEROUSLY ATTACKED AT A TIME WHEN HIS COUNTRY IS IN ECONOMIC DIFFICULTY, WHICH WE HAVE FREQUENTLY REPORTED HERE, AND HAVING TO FACE IN PARTICULAR A FUEL SHORTAGE - WHICH WILL SLOW DOWN HIS TROOP MOVEMENTS - PRESIDENT MOBUTU CONTENTED HIMSELF WITH APPEALING TO ZAIRE'S TRADITIONAL FRIENDS: BELGIAN, FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES. NOT TO ASK THEM TO SEND HIM MILITARY CONTINGENTS, BUT TO SIMPLY REQUEST THAT THEY EXPEDITE DELIVERY OF ARMS, MUNITIONS AND VARIOUS EQUIPMENT, WHICH HE ORDERED SOME TIME AGO.

10. IN ADDITION, PRESIDENT MOBUTU ASKED HIS FOREIGN MINISTER, NGUZA-KARL-I-BOND, TO REMAIN IN PERMANENT CONTACT WITH ALL THE AFRICAN CAPITALS. INDEED, DESPITE THE FACT THAT NO ONE COULD

DENY ANY LONGER ANGOLAN, CUBAN AND SOVIET COMPLICITY, WHICH BENEFITS THE SHABAN AGGRESSORS, PRESIDENT MOBUTU IS MORE THAN EVER IN FAVOR OF LETTING THE AFRICANS RESOLVE THE PROBLEMS WHICH ARE OCCURRING IN AFRICA. THIS IS WHY FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE PRESENT EVENTS, THE ZAIRIAN CHIEF OF STATE INSISTED ON DIRECTLY AND FULLY INFORMING ALL THE MEMBER STATES OF THE OAU. AND IT IS ALSO WHY ZAIRE ACCEPTED THAT NIGERIA ACT AS MEDIATOR IN THIS AFFAIR. "ON THE CONDITION, IT WAS SPECIFIED IN KINSHASA, THAT ANGOLA WAS IN AGREEMENT." AN IMPORTANT PRECISION, JUSTIFIED BY THE DUPLICITY THE NETO REGIME HAS SO FAR DEMONSTRATED, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE CLAIM OF NOT BEING NOTIFIED OF ZAIRE'S OFFICIAL - AND UNILATERAL - DECISION RECOGNIZE THE AUTHORITIES IN LUANDA.

11. PRESIDENT MOBUTU THUS INTENDS THAT THINGS BE VERY CLEAR FROM THE START AND WANTS TO AVOID THE POSSIBILITY OF ANGOLA FALSIFYING THE EVENTUAL RESULTS OF THIS MEDIATION, UNDER THE PRETEXT OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 KINSHA 03216 01 OF 02 090013Z

NOT HAVING ACCEPTED THE PREMISIS.

12. IF KINSHASA IS THUS WAITING, WITH THE INTEREST THAT ONE CAN GUESS, FOR THE ANGOLAN REACTION TO THE NIGERIAN INITIATIVE, ONE IS SOMEWHAT SURPRISED AT THE AMERICAN REACTION.

13. SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS VANCE MADE KNOWN THAT IN VIEW OF THE NIGERIAN PROPOSAL "IT WOULD PERHAPS NOT BE NECESSARY FOR THE UNITED STATES TO SATISFY THE NEW REQUEST FOR AID MADE BY THE ZAIRIAN GOVERNMENT"... WOULD CYRUS VANCE BE SO NAIVE AND WOULD PRESIDENT CARTER COMMIT THE ERROR OF UNDERESTIMATING SOVIET AND CUBAN DETERMINATION IN AFRICA AT A TIME WHEN MR. PODGORNYY IS VISITING HIS FRIENDS THERE AND WHEN FIDEL CASTRO IS DECLARING IN ANGOLA THAT CUBA "WILL PUT NO LIMITATIONS ON ITS COOPERATION WITH ANGOLA AND WILL GRANT AID TO THE LIMIT OF ITS CAPABILITIES".

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PAGE 01 KINSHA 03216 02 OF 02 061820Z
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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P R 061515Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2838
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 KINSHASA 3216

14 EVEN IF THE NIGERIAN INITIATIVE WERE TO BE CROWNED WITH SUCCESS ON THE PRECISE POINT OF THE AGGRESSIONS AGAINST SHABA, THERE WOULD STILL REMAIN THE FACT THAT THE CUBAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE WOULD PROLONG ITS PRESENCE IN ANGOLA WITH WEAPONS AND ARMAMENTS EVENTUALLY REINFORCED "TO THE LIMIT OF CUBA'S CAPABILITIES". WHEN IT IS KNOWN THAT, IN THIS MATTER "THE LIMITS" OF CUBA ARE INTERMINGLED WITH THOSE OF THE SOVIET UNION, IT IS SURPRISING TO SEE THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION SEIZE UPON THE FIRST EXCUSE TO PRESENT ITSELF TO LIMIT, ON ITS SIDE, THE AID IT IS PROVIDING TO ZAIRE.

15. NO DOUBT, ANDREW YOUNG, THE NEW US REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UN IS NOT DRAWN TO KINSHASA. BUT TO THE PERSONAL SENTIMENTS OF ONE WHO HAS BECOME THE GREAT FRIEND OF JIMMY CARTER AFTER HAVING BEEN THAT OF MARTIN LUTHER KING SUFFICE TO JUSTIFY A MODIFICATION IN THE BALANCE OF FORCES IN AFRICA?

16. THE FORD ADMINISTRATION HAD ALREADY COMMITTED A MONUMENTAL-- AND MOST LIKELY IRREPARABLE--GAFFE BY NOT OPPOSING THE CUBAN LANDING AT A TIME WHEN A QUICK AND ENERGETIC DIPLOMATIC RIPOSTE WOULD HAVE WITHOUT DOUBT SUFFICED TO PUT AN END TO THIS
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PAGE 02 KINSHA 03216 02 OF 02 061820Z

ADVENTURE. WILL THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION COMMIT A MORE DRAMATIC ERROR BY APPRAISING THE DEVELOPING SITUATION IN AFRICA ACCORDING TO CRITERIA THAT BEAR NO RELATIONSHIP TO THE NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE FACTS? DOES NOT PRESIDENT CARTER UNDERSTAND THAT THE ULTIMATE SOVIET GOAL IS TO EXTEND ITS NEOCOLONIALIST DOMINATION OVER ALL OF CENTRAL AFRICA AND, IN SO DOING, CUT OFF THE WEST FROM THOSE STATES WHICH FURNISH IT WITH THE RAW MATERIALS IT NEEDS?

17. WHILE PEKING DENOUNCES CATEGORICALLY "THE SOVIET SOCIAL IMPERIALISTIC AGGRESSION AND EXPANSIONISM IN AFRICA", WASHINGTON IS INCLINED TO DENY THE EVIDENCE AND TO SPLIT HAIRS. AND, THIS, AT A TIME WHEN PRESIDENT CARTER AFFIRMS THAT THE US WILL DEFEND FREEDOM THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. EVERYWHERE, EXCEPT IN AFRICA?

18. IN KINSHASA, THERE ARE OTHER REASONS FOR BITTERNESS. NOTABLY, WHEN ONE NOTES THE RAPIDITY WITH WHICH CERTAIN COMMENTATORS WHO, ONLY YESTERDAY, WERE PROTESTING THEIR FRIENDSHIP FOR ZAIRE, ARE NOW AFFIRMING THAT THE REGIME ESTABLISHED BY PRESIDENT MOBUTU IS AT THE END OF ITS ROPE, IF NOT MORIBUND. IT IS TO FORGET SOMEWHAT QUICKLY THAT THIS SAME REGIME CAME ABOUT AT THE END OF A VAST REBELLION COVERING TWO THIRDS OF ZAIRIAN TERRITORY. IT IS ALSO TO FORGET THAT, IN THE OPINION OF ALL OBSERVERS, PRESIDENT MOBUTU MANAGED TO CREATE A TRUE NATIONAL CONSCIENCE, ALLERGIC TO ALL ATTEMPTS AT SECESSION AND FOREIGN INTERVENTION.

19. WHILE THE PRESS IN THE SOCIALIST CAMP -- OR SUPPOSEDLY BEING IN IT -- PLACES ITSELF WITHOUT RESERVATIONS BEHIND NETO, IT IS NECESSARY TO NOTE THAT A LARGE PART OF THE WESTERN PRESS IS ENGULFED ONCE AGAIN IN A MASOCHISM WHICH SEEMS TO BE ITS FAVORITE PENCHANT AND DWELLS WITH A CERTAIN UNHEALTH RELISH ON THE MISFORTUNES STRIKING ZAIRE ONCE AGAIN, EVEN THOUGH FOR ELEVEN YEARS THE MOBUTIST REGIME HAD MANAGED TO MAKE THEM A MEMORY.

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PAGE 03 KINSHA 03216 02 OF 02 061820Z

20. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE KINSHASA AUTHORITIES CAN REJOICE OVER THE CLEAR AND UNEQUIVOCAL ATTITUDE OF THE FRENCH AND BELGIAN GOVERNMENTS. THERE ARE NO MILITARY ACCORDS BETWEEN KINSHASA, PARIS AND BRUSSELS. BUT THERE ARE FRIENDSHIP TREATIES AND CONVENTIONS ON COOPERATION.

21 THERE IS NOTHING BELLICOSE OR REPREHENSIBLE IN WANTING TO PUT INTO EFFECT THE ONE OR THE OTHER. THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT DOES IT, DESPITE UNFAVORABLE INTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES. ITS MERIT IS ONLY TOO GREAT. AND, IT IS NOT EVERY DAY THAT IS IS POSSIBLE TO CONGRATULATE THE TINDEMANS-DECLERCQ-VANDEN BOEYNANTS TEAM FOR ITS POLITICAL COURAGE.

22. FINALLY IT IS NECESSARY TO UNDERLINE THE COOLNESS AND DISCIPLINE OF SEVERAL THOUSANDS OF BELGIANS WHO STILL LIVE IN ZAIRE AND WHO HAVE COMMITTED THEMSELVES WITHOUT RESERVATION TO THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY OF THE COUNTRY. BETTER THAN ANYONE, THESE BELGIANS ARE WELL PLACED TO APPRECIATE THE ROTTEN DEAL GIVEN THEIR ADOPTED COUNTRY. BUT MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE, THEY ARE DETERMINED TO CONTINUE THEIR EFFORTS AND ESPECIALLY TO ASSUME THE NEW RESPONSIBILITIES ENTRUSTED THEM BY PRESIDENT MOBUTU.

23. ZAIRE WILL HAVE LEARNED ONCE AGAIN WHO ARE ITS REAL FRIENDS***

24. COMMENTS: WE MIGHT ALSO POINT OUT THAT THE FOREGOING ARTICLE-

-WHICH WE ARE CONVINCED REPRESENTS MOBUTU'S VIEW--LAYS THE
GROUNDWORK FOR A VIGOROUSLY RENEWED REQUEST FOR US ARMS/
MUNITIONS WHEN THE NIGERIAN MEDIATION EFFORT FAILS. AND, AS
PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, WE BELIEVE MOBUTU HAS LITTLE CONFIDENCE
THAT THE MEDIATION EFFORT WILL IN FACT SUCCEED.
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Message Attributes

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Subject: SHABA ATTACK: MOBUTU'S DIPLOMATIC FLANKING OPERATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, AO, CG, NI, US, (MOBUTU SESE SEKO), (NETO, AGOSTINHO)
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